

District of Columbia Public Schools
2009 Summer Reading List for Rising 11th Grade Students

Author	Title	Synopsis
Adams, Douglas	The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy	The story of a British earthling plucked from his planet, and his subsequent adventures elsewhere in the universe.
Alvarez, Julia	Before We Were Free	In the early 1960s in the Dominican Republic, twelve-year-old Anita learns that her family is involved in the underground movement to end the bloody rule of the dictator, General Trujillo.
Angelou, Maya	Gather Together in My Name	Angelou's autobiography, <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> continues as the book begins in her teens and she has given birth to a son.
Baldwin, James	Go Tell It on the Mountain	Describes a day in the life of several members of a Harlem fundamentalist church. The saga of three generations of people is related through flashbacks.
Bell, Madison Smartt	All Souls Rising	One of the most prolific and gifted writers at work today presents an epic novel of astonishing depth and range about the black uprising in Haiti 200 years ago. A remarkable retelling of an episode of racial hatred at its most visceral and most unimaginably destruction.
Borland, Hal	When the Legends Die	An orphaned Ute Indian boy wins stardom on the rodeo circuit but, disillusioned by his success, returns to the ways of his ancestors.
Bradbury, Ray	Something Wicked This Way Comes	Two boys, best friends in a small midwestern town, finally come to understand that of all the terrors threatening them from Cooger and Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show the greatest menace exists within themselves.
Bragg, Rick	Somebody Told Me: The Newspaper Stories of Rick Bragg	Pulitzer Prize winning reporter Bragg's articles cover victims of natural disasters, prison inmates, economic inequality, the elderly, race, Louisiana bayou culture, schools, and other issues of the American scene.
Bronte, Charlotte	Jane Eyre	When a penniless governess falls in love with the brooding master of Thornfield, she is unaware of the tragic events that will follow.
Cisneros, Sandra	Woman Hollering Creek, and Other Stories	A collection of short stories giving voice to the vigorous and varied life on both sides of the United States-Mexican border.
Conrad, Joseph	Heart of Darkness	The captain of a steam ship on the Congo River meets and observes Mr. Kurtz, the fabled chief of the Inner Station for the trading company on that river in 1890.
Desai Hidier, Tanuja	Born Confused	As Dimple Lala turns seventeen, she realizes that life is about to become more complex as her best friend starts pulling away and her parents try to find a suitable boyfriend for Dimple, despite the fact that she is not interested.

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Dumas, Alexandre	The Count of Monte Cristo	After a false accusation resulting in twenty years imprisonment, Dantes escapes and returns to France, wreaking vengeance upon those who betrayed him.
Eliott, T. S.	Murder in the Cathedral	A dramatization in verse of the murder of Thomas Becket in 1170 in the cathedral at Canterbury.
Ephron, Amy	A Cup of Tea	This novel adds a touch of class--and a love triangle--to the classic theme of parallel lives and their accidental crossing.
Feinstein, John	Cover-up	An entertaining mix of mystery, insider detail (including cameos by big-name sports media figures), and ripped-from-the-headlines subject matter (the scandal this time deals with steroid-taking offensive linemen).
Foer, Jonathan	Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close	When his father dies in the World Trade Center collapse, Oskar, a budding inventor and photo collector, shifts his boundless energy to a quest for answers. He finds a key hidden in his father's things that doesn't fit any lock in their New York City apartment; its container is labeled "Black."
Gaiman, Neil	Anansi Boys	Charlie Nancy was leading a comfortable life until his father died and discovered that dear old dad was a human form of Anansi, the African trickster god, and that he had a brother, Spider, who inherited some of his father's godlike abilities.
Gardner, John	Grendel	Grendel, the monster, tells his side of the Beowulf story, and compares his values with the chief values of human beings.
Goldman, Steve	Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film About the Grapes of Wrath	Mitch, a shy and awkward high school junior, negotiates the difficult social situations he encounters, both with girls and with his best friend David, after David reveals to him that he is gay.
Green, John	Looking for Alaska	Alaska Young's story unfolds in all-night bull sessions with her friends, and the depth of her unhappiness becomes obvious. The chapters of the novel are headed by a number of days "before" and "after" what readers surmise is Alaska's suicide.
Gruen, Sara	Water for Elephants	The novel, told in flashback by nonagenarian Jacob Jankowski, recounts the wild and wonderful period he spent with the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth, a traveling circus he joined during the Great Depression.
Haddon, Mark	The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time	Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

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Hemingway, Ernest	A Farewell to Arms	An American ambulance driver serving on the Austro-Italian front becomes entangled with an English nurse and deserts to join her after the retreat of Caporetto.
Hughes, Langston	The Big Sea: An Autobiography	Hughes tell of his life until his first success as a writer, including his travels throughout the world.
Hurston, Zora Neale	Their Eyes Were Watching God	A Black woman searches for a fulfilling relationship through two loveless marriages and finally finds it in the person of Tea Cake, an itinerant laborer and gambler.
Kostova, Elizabeth	The Historian	In 1972, a 16-year-old American living in Amsterdam finds a mysterious book about Dracula that has a way of forcing itself on its owners, with terrifying results.
LeGuin, Ursula	The Left Hand of Darkness	An official from an interplanetary federation is called in to arbitrate peace on a planet whose inhabitants are technically advanced, androgynous, and have telepathic powers.
Maguire, Gregory	Wicked	The life and times of the wicked witch of the West from L.Frank Baum's classic story of the Wizard of Oz.
Martel, Yana	Life of Pi	Pi Patel, having spent an idyllic childhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of a zookeeper, sets off with his family at the age of sixteen to start anew in Canada, but his life takes a marvelous turn when their ship sinks in the Pacific, leaving him adrift on a raft with a 450-pound Bengal tiger for company.
McCloud, Scott	Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics	Overview of the drawing and storytelling decisions and possibilities available to comics artists, covering everything from facial expressions and page layout to the choice of tools and story construction.
Meldrum, Christina	Madapple	The worlds of science and faith collide in the story of Aslaug, whose mother proclaimed her a virgin birth.
Mortenson, Greg	Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission	One man's campaign to build schools in the most dangerous, remote, and anti-American reaches of Asia.
Naylor, Gloria	The Women of Brewster Place	A series of vignettes focusing on seven African-American women who are residents of Brewster Place, showing how their reactions to certain situations are affected by their backgrounds, ages, dreams, and problems.
Nelson, Marilyn	A Wreath for Emmett Till	This illustrated poetry collection eulogizes Emmett Till, an African American man who was killed in a brutal, racially motivated lynching in 1955.

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O'Brien, Tim	The Things They Carried	Neither a novel nor a short story collection, it is an arc of fictional episodes, taking place in the childhoods of its characters, in the jungles of Vietnam and back home in America two decades later.
Orwell, George	1984	Classic novel of life in a totalitarian regime of the future where Big Brother is always watching.
Pelecanos, George	DC Noir	A collection of stories detailing the seedy underside of the nation's capital. Pimps, whores, gangsters, and con-men run rampant in zones of this city that most never hear about.
Santiago, Esmeralda	When I Was Puerto Rican	Memoirs of the author's childhood and youth in Puerto Rico and New York City.
Shakespeare, William	Hamlet	Shakespeare's classic play of revenge and madness.
Stork, Francisco X.	Marcelo in the Real World	After finding a photo of a disfigured girl injured by the negligence of his father's biggest client, 17 year old Marcelo, a high-functioning autistic teen, must decide whether to follow his conscience and try to right the wrong, even as he realizes that decision will bring irrevocable changes to his life and to his relationship with his father.
Tan, Amy	The Joy Luck Club	In 1949 four Chinese women began meeting in San Francisco to play mah jong. They called their gathering the Joy Luck Club. Forty years later they look back and remember.
Walker, Alice	The Color Purple	The story of two sisters: Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Celie, a child-wife living in the South, in the medium of their letters to each other and in Celie's case, the desperate letters she begins, "Dear God."
Walls, Jeannette	The Glass Castle	Walls chronicles her upbringing at the hands of eccentric, nomadic parents -Rose Mary, her frustrated-artist mother, and Rex, her brilliant, alcoholic father, including learning to support themselves, eating out of trashcans at school or painting their skin so the holes in their pants didn't show.
Wells, H. G.	The Time Machine	The personal life and literary career of the wide-ranging British author known for his science fiction, histories, and novels.
West, Dorothy	The Wedding	The story of five generations of an African-American family and the wedding on Martha's Vineyard that could tear them apart.
Wharton, Edith	Ethan Frome	The tragic story of Ethan Frome, a New England farmer married to a hypochondriac and in love with his wife's lively cousin, Mattie.